

**DAVIE AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD**  
**SEPTEMBER 10, 2012**  
**6:00 P.M.**

**1. ROLL CALL**

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. Board members present were: Chair Dave Parrish, Julie Aitken, Jason Hurley, and Sam Scott. Board Secretary Janet Gale was also present. Vice Chair Scott Weinstein was absent.

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES: August 6, 2012**

Not subject to approval at this time.

**3. OLD BUSINESS**

**3.1 Follow Up on Van Kirk Property Tax Implications – Mr. Phillip Holste,**  
Intergovernmental Affairs Manager

Intergovernmental Affairs Manager, Phillip Holste advised that on August 31, 2012, the Town submitted a nonprofit exemption application to the Deputy General Counsel on behalf of the North-South Institute. At this time, no formal response has been received, although Mr. Holste has had multiple email communications with the Deputy General Counsel. He noted, however, that the Property Appraiser's website had modified the taxable value for the property from \$2.4 million to \$36,000, which may be a preliminary indication that the exemption request had been accepted. He hoped to receive formal notification of acceptance within the next few days. If the exemption had been denied, the Town would make an appeal to the Value Adjustment Board.

Ms. Aitken suggested that for future reference, when there is an agricultural lease of Town property, the Town should institute a policy of double-checking each lease with the Property Appraiser's Office. Mr. Holste said every lease is reviewed by the Town's attorney.

Dr. Scott wished to thank everyone who had been involved in this process. He felt small farmers in the community will be very pleased if the exemption request had been accepted. Roughly eight to nine products are ready to go to the Farmer's Market at present.

He continued that there are plans to begin a produce club, which would establish a set price for a box of goods for a family of four. Each member will determine the five or ten products they would like included in their box, and farmers will be asked to plant these crops. He estimated that the cost for an individual might be \$19.99, or \$30 for a family of four. The club could also target participants who are shut-ins or are otherwise unable to attend the market: a van could deliver their produce to them, with the assistance of volunteers.

Councilmember Caryl Hattan arrived at 6:17 p.m.

Ms. Aitken asked if plans had been made for the distribution of excess produce. Dr. Scott said an advisor to the group had offered to take extra items to the Salvation Army and the Broward Pantry. He added that through a program with the Kiwanis Club, the farmers hope to provide cooking demonstrations for children and parents, with particular outreach to low-income families in the area.

Ms. Aitken asked if Dr. Scott would be able to write an article on this proposed program, which could then be submitted to the Davie Update to publicize these efforts. Dr. Scott said the produce club will be discussed in an upcoming newsletter, which will also discuss the possibility of providing low-income residents with fresh produce.

Councilmember Hattan noted that there is an afterschool program in the Eastside Community Center which could teach growing and cooking produce to children. Dr. Scott agreed that they hope to expand the cooking program throughout the community and involve more

families. Children could visit the farm as well as the market, and could learn to prepare simple meals with fresh produce. He noted that transportation, however, is a challenge.

Chair Parrish suggested that the EASE Foundation could be another program to which extra produce could be donated. Councilmember Hattan added that a new food bank, Feeding South Florida, sends trucks to collect donations within the community. Dr. Scott asked that this organization be advised of the opportunity to collect produce from the farm.

He noted that some produce is not sold for cosmetic reasons, such as minor blemishes, although it may still be used. Ms. Aitken observed that some produce remains edible past its sell-by date as well. Councilmember Hattan pointed out that a recent State law allows restaurants to donate produce that had passed its sell-by date but is still edible.

### **3.2 Follow Up Community Gardens Guidelines Regarding Resolution R-2012-71**

#### **3.3 Address the Application of Fertilizers That Are Not Organic**

Chair Parrish commented that the guidelines for community gardens specify that only organic fertilizers may be used for organic gardening. While there are multiple home remedies that act as pesticides or fungicides, he pointed out that organic fertilizers are less reliable. A study from the University of Florida shows that non-organic fertilizers have been developed with major and minor elements specific to the needs of south Florida soil, and can be used to target specific plants. He advised that a company with which he had done business had sold fertilizer to the Town of Davie, as well as other municipalities, and stated that a sales representative from this company had offered to explain the advantages associated with non-organic fertilizer for vegetables.

Mr. Holste noted that the community garden guidelines were developed by the Parks and Recreation Department, and the requirement for organic fertilizer was probably recommended to them by other community garden programs. He offered to pass the board's recommendation on to Parks and Recreation Director David Flaherty, stating that he felt there was no reason there could not be additional discussion on this guideline.

Ms. Aitken asked if comparisons were made to best management practices with regard to disposal of organic fertilizers in order to prevent the pollution of groundwater. She pointed out that some organic fertilizers, such as manure, can be high in phosphorus. Dr. Scott said if these products are allowed to decompose properly through composting, there is less danger of runoff contamination; however, organic fertilizer contains fewer specific minor nutrients that can be helpful to crops. If there is too much of one element, it is difficult for a plant to absorb nutrients properly.

Dr. Scott said it may be a good idea to conduct soil tests on the properties selected as community garden sites in order to ensure the macro- and microelements in the soil are identified. Councilmember Hattan pointed out that community gardens will not be commercial ventures, but are intended only for members of the community to grow vegetables. Dr. Scott said the University of Florida would conduct soil tests at no charge, which would allow the Town to know what type of fertilizer would be best for the garden. Ms. Aitken commented that soil testing could increase the productivity of the program.

Chair Parrish added that some fertilizers are designed to completely break down in the turf within three months. Container fertilizers have a slower release and break down by temperature.

Mr. Holste said he would pass this information along to both Mr. Flaherty and Senior Operations Manager Matt Mlodzinski. Dr. Scott recommended that Parks and Recreation and Public Works work closely together on soil testing for the community garden program.

### **3.4 Follow Up on Progress for Re-establishing Contact with Residents Interested in the Robbins Park Pilot Program**

Dr. Scott said he and Vice Chair Weinstein had provided Parks and Recreation with a list of residents interested in the community garden program; he advised that he could provide this information again if necessary, so the Department could reach out to these individuals to find out if they are still interested. He observed that the more volunteers participating in a program, the more successful that program is likely to be.

With regard to a prospective children's community garden program, he advised that farmers are currently laying out soil to be placed into designated rows and boxes to be used as raised beds. Children and adult volunteers will be assigned different rows to tend. Crops include strawberries, tomatoes, and cucumbers.

Dr. Scott continued that farmers will be happy to assist the pilot community garden project at Robbins Park, as there are roughly 75 specialists in subjects such as production agriculture and entomology. Small training sessions on these topics are sometimes held at the Farmer's Market, and have been attended by community garden participants from other communities. If community garden participants have questions regarding basic agriculture, they are also encouraged to reach out to the agricultural extension at the urban farm.

He observed that there is a community group located on Hiatus Road that is growing produce in backyard gardens, including beans, peas, and leafy vegetables. Dr. Scott noted, however, that this group cannot sell their produce at the Farmer's Market, as a community garden is intended to provide only for participating individuals. Ms. Aitken commented that this group could form a food club, which could then exchange excess products among its members.

Councilmember Hattan remarked that interested individuals have been waiting over one year to participate in the community garden program. Mr. Holste said he would reach out to Mr. Flaherty for an update on the progress of the pilot program. Chair Parrish said he and Dr. Scott would be willing to provide guidance regarding planting and/or fertilizing.

## **4. NEW BUSINESS**

Dr. Scott suggested that because the Town had demonstrated an interest in agriculture, there should be consideration of holding an Agricultural Day, or the incorporation of agricultural elements into one of the Town's existing festivals. Councilmember Hattan cautioned that the Town's calendar should be consulted before such an event is scheduled.

Mr. Holste asked if an agricultural element could be added to the Green Fair, which is scheduled for November. Councilmember Hattan proposed that this event could be held at Battens Farm. Dr. Scott said Battens Farm would be willing to accommodate this event. Chair Parrish offered to supply a truck and trailer if Battens Farm wished to construct a float for the Orange Blossom Parade in early 2013.

## **5. AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

Ms. Aitken stated that Mayor Judy Paul had asked the board to update the Davie Farm Guide, which is a compilation of State, County, and Town laws and ordinances related to farming. There have been amendments and changes to many of these laws since the Farm Guide's last update, which should be included in the revised document. It had not yet been determined whether the Farm Guide would be available in print, although it will be available online. Dr. Scott suggested that the Farm Guide could also include an appendix with a list of farms that are open to the public in and around the Town of Davie. Ms. Aitken asked that the updated laws be sent to the board members prior to their next meeting.

Chair Parrish said a representative of AAT would also be scheduled to address the board at an upcoming meeting.

Dr. Scott said follow-up should continue on Item 3.1 until a determination had been made on this issue. Mr. Holste said he would forward any official notification to the board members when it is received.

It was decided by consensus that the board would discuss the community gardening guidelines further once they have seen a presentation on organic or non-organic fertilizers.

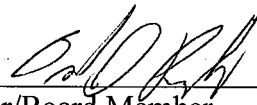
**6. COMMENTS AND / OR SUGGESTIONS**

Dr. Scott noted that the members may have received communication regarding a Food Policy Roundtable to be held in September by Broward Regional Health and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Citizen farmers, planters, and other interested parties who would like to see better food options in Broward County are invited to attend and give their input on the development of food policy.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Date Approved: 7/5/13

  
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Chair/Board Member